

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 09012 100659Z
ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 SCA-01 /015 W
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P R 100623Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 997
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, RP (GOULD, FRANK)
SUBJECT: W/W FRANK GOULD

REF: (A) STATE 133059, (B) KUALA LUMPUR 2733 (MAY 12, 1976)

1. EMBOFF OBTAINED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING FRANK GOULD DURING TRIP TO COTABATO AND SULU. (NO INFORMATION DEVELOPED RE STEVEKEN.) WHILE INFORMATION IS CONTRADICTORY, IT DOES PROVIDE SOME ADDITIONAL LEADS WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED UP AS POSSIBLE. FULLER DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

2. IN SIBUTU EMBOFF INTERVIEWED MASTER AND CHARTERER OF ML "SPIRIT OF SIBUTU" WHO RECONFIRMED WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TOLD BY SECRETARY ENRILE; I.E. THAT THEY TRANSPORTED GOULD TO SANDAKAN, SABAH, IN APRIL OR MAY OF 1975. LOCAL AIR FORCE UNIT SHOWED EMBOFF RECENTLY PREPARED REPORT WHICH ALSO SUPPORTS THIS HYPOTHESIS, BUT ADDS LITTLE SOLID FACT.

3. IN COTABATO, HOWEVER, EMBOFF OBTAINED TOTALLY NEW VERSION WHICH CONTRADICTS ABOVE. ACCORDING THIS STORY, GOULD WAS KILLED BY MUSLIM REBELS IN KATULI (OUTSKIRTS OF COTABATO CITY) ON "TENTH DAYS OF FASTING MONTH " (SEPTEMBER 27) IN 1974. ACCORDING STORY GOULD WAS KILLED BECAUSE DURING TIME OF EXTREME POLITICAL TENSION AND HEAVY FIGHTING IN AREA HE VENTURED
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PAGE 02 MANILA 09012 100659Z

INTO MUSLIM NEIGHBORHOOD WITH A MUSLIM COMPANION WHO WAS BELIEVED BY MNLF REBELS TO BE GOVERNMENT INFORMER. THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS MARKED FOR ASSASSINATION. GOULD AND ANOTHER CHRISTIAN FILIPINO COMPANION WERE ALLEGEDLY KILLED SOLELY BECAUSE THEY HAPPENED TO BE WITNESSES TO HIS KILLING. THREE BODIES WERE DISPOSED OF IN CROCODILE INFESTED RIO GRANDE RIVER.

4. SOURCE OF ABOVE INFORMATION IS YOUNG MUSLIM WHO ACTS AS COURIER FOR MNLF. THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT SOURCE AND INTERMEDIARY WHO LED US TO HIM MIGHT BE IN DEEP TROUBLE IF LOCAL AUTHORITIES REALIZED HE HAD BEEN TALKING DIRECTLY TO US EMBASSY.

5. ACCORDING LOCAL MUSLIM ATTORNEY WHO PUT EMBOFF IN CONTACT WITH SOURCE, SAME STORY ALSO TOLD BY ANOTHER MUSLIM SOURCE. HOWEVER, LATTER WAS IN HILLS WITH REBELS AND EMBOFF NOT ABLE TO CONTACT HIM.

6. COTABATO SCENARIO HAS SURFACE PLAUSIBILITY IF ONLY BECAUSE DATE HAPPENS TO COINCIDE WITH LAST DAY THAT GOULD WAS DEFINITELY SEEN BY MISSIONARY PAUL VAN BUREN IN NEARBY KIDAPAWAN. EMBOFF (PRINGLE) WHO VISITED COTABATO (AND HAS FOLLOWED CASE CLOSELY OVER LAST YEAR) HAS LONG FELT THAT IT WAS MORE LIKELY THAT COTABATO WAS SCENE OF GOULD DISAPPEARANCE. VERSION THAT GOULD ESCAPED TO SABAH IN 1975 LEAVES ALTOGETHER TOO MANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS FACT THAT MALAYSIANS HAVE NO RECORD OF HIS ENTERING COUNTRY. SIBUTU STORY COULD BE BASED ON HONEST CONFUSION OF GOULD WITH SOMEONE ELSE. FACT THAT GOP IS PUSHING IT SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE TAKEN AS EVIDENCE OF SINISTER INTENTIONS, BUT SIMPLY AS INDICATION THAT GOVERNMENT PREFERS NOT TO HAVE IMPLIED RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS DISAPPEARANCE RESTING WITH THEM.

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PAGE 03 MANILA 09012 100659Z

7. EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP FURTHER DETAILS ON ALLEGED COTABATO KILLING, BEARING IN MIND SENSITIVITY AND VULNERABILITY OF SOURCES. IN MEANTIME SUGGEST REPLY TO PROFESSOR GOULD SUMMARIZING FINDINGS AS STATED ABOVE, EMPHASIZING THAT LATEST INFORMATION IS TENUOUS, THAT PUBLICITY COULD JEOPARDIZE SOURCES, AND THAT WE WILL FOLLOW UP AS POSSIBLE.

8. WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY CONCUR WITH LANGUAGE OF PLANNED DEPARTMENT REPLY (PARA 2, REFTTEL). EMBASSY CANNOT ASSUME POLICE INVESTIGATOR FUNCTION WHICH IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES. WE WILL CONTINUE HOWEVER, TO TRY TO PLAY SUPPORTIVE ROLE ASSUMING RELATIVE CEASEFIRE CONTINUES AND WILL PERMIT OCCASIONAL EMBOFF VISITS TO THE AREA.

9. FOR KUALA LUMPUR: WOULD APPRECIATE IF EMBASSY COULD RECHECK WITH SABAH IMMIGRATION TO SEE IF THEY HAVE ANY RECORD OF FRANK GOULD ENTRANCE IN SANDAKAN IN APRIL/MAY

1975 VIA ML "SPIRIT OF SIBUTU." BOAT CHARTERER IS
EMPHATIC THAT INDIVIDUAL WHOM HE BELIEVES TO HAVE BEEN
GOULD CLEARED SABAH IMMIGRATION WITHOUT TROUBLE.

10. FOR DEPARTMENT: REQUEST DEPARTMENT REPEAT REFTTEL A
TO KUALA LUMPUR.
STULL

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